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SOUTH CAROLINA EARNS ‘B’ GRADE IN 2026 NATIONAL REPORT CARD ON TEACHING PERSONAL FINANCE IN HIGH SCHOOLS

State Projected to Earn ‘A’ Grade by 2027

DENVER—[2026 National Report Card on State Efforts to Improve Financial Literacy in High Schools™](#), issued by the Denver-based [National Endowment for Financial Education® \(NEFE®\)](#). But the state is projected to raise its grade to an A by 2027.

NEFE is issuing this sixth report card, which reflects how well personal finance is taught in high schools. The previous five report cards were issued by the Center for Financial Literacy (CFL) at Champlain College in Burlington, Vt. The first report was issued in 2013. Beginning with this latest edition, NEFE assumes responsibility for the report card, expanding its reach and influence as a leading measure of state-level financial education policy for years to come.

“Adopting a standalone, full-semester high school personal finance graduation requirement is a vital first step in delivering effective financial education to all students,” says Billy Hensley, Ph.D., president and CEO of NEFE. “NEFE applauds South Carolina and supports educational leaders as they work to effectively implement these programs in the classroom.”

John Pelletier, Senior Fellow at NEFE, says South Carolina requires students to take a half-year course in economics that includes personal finance concepts. He estimates that the course contains 15 hours of personal finance instruction, or 25 per cent of the course content.

“Beginning with the Class of 2027, every student must take a stand-alone personal finance course to graduate,” Pelletier says. “And the state department of education has online curricula and resources for educators to guide them in the development of the course. So, in all likelihood, the state will raise its grade to an A in our next report card.”

He notes that it is not clear how South Carolina measures high school student achievement in financial literacy or how the state monitors local school district implementation of the financial literacy education requirements in high school.

National Report Card Overview

Pelletier projects that when the Class of 2031 graduates, 29 states will require high school students to take a standalone personal finance course, with an estimated 73% of public high school students who graduate in 2031 taking a substantive personal finance course prior to graduation. When the first report card was

issued in 2013, only three states earned an A grade, representing just 5% of students in the nation's public schools.

“Financial literacy is linked to positive outcomes like wealth accumulation, stock market participation, effective retirement planning and avoiding high-cost alternative financial services. Conversely, poor financial literacy and negative financial behaviors often go hand in hand,” says Pelletier. “High school personal finance education can help alleviate the cycle of poverty that exists in our nation. Requiring all students to take a standalone financial literacy course, regardless of their race, ethnicity or economic status, is an important step our nation can take toward reducing inequality.”

A [2025 nationwide opinion poll](#) from NEFE found that 83% of U.S. adults believe the state they live in should require a semester- or year-long course focused on personal finance as a graduation requirement, while 82% of respondents who attended high school say they wish they were required to complete a personal finance class while they were in school.

“NEFE’s data reflect strong public support for financial education in high school. The vast majority of Americans agree their state should require a semester- or year-long course for graduation, and that personal finance is equally as important as core subjects like math, science and English. Furthermore, most Americans believe the quality of their financial life would be better had they received financial education in school,” Hensley adds.

To produce the report card, NEFE conducted detailed reviews of high school graduation requirements, state academic standards for personal finance education, and laws, regulations and guidelines related to how each state delivers personal finance education in its public high schools. A national map with information on the 50 states and the District of Columbia and a downloadable copy of the [full report card](#) is available [here](#).

About the National Endowment for Financial Education

The National Endowment for Financial Education (NEFE) is the independent, centralizing voice providing leadership, research and collaboration to champion effective financial education and advance financial well-being. NEFE has received national recognition for strengthening action-oriented research agendas, mobilizing intermediaries, and creating better solutions for researchers, educators, practitioners and policymakers. Beginning with the 2026 edition, NEFE assumes the administration of the National Report Card on State Efforts to Improve High School Personal Finance Education. For more, visit www.nefe.org.

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